Editorial :

● The Gary Powers of Tourism

Russia appears to have bagged the Gary Powers of the tourist business. They winged him in the camera and he told all, denying only that he was a spy for the United States Government. His spying, he said, was strictly private enterprise. He was traveling through Russia with camera and note pad to gather material for a book on Russian preparations for war.

In Cuba, a similar admission would have gotten this man shot. The Russians must be given credit for some restraint. Perhaps they examined his notes and photographs and decided not to take him too seriously. Anyway, they gave him a suspended sentence, asked him to promise not to write his book, and rushed him to the border.

There are other curious features to the case. The tourist was traveling on a $2,000 grant from the North-craft Educational Fund of Philadelphia. An attorney for the fund refused to name its backers or to give the address of its headquarters.

Different readers will draw different conclusions from that fact. But it can be said that under present conditions of the cold war, privately financed espionage operations, whether conducted to gather classified information or simply to gather material for a book, promise to contribute little to our over-all counter-intelligence effort. Individuals engaging in such operations take some of the same risks that are taken by filibusters landing on the Cuban shore. They endanger their own lives, they may complicate the efforts of real and skilled intelligence agents, and they may, as has happened in this instance, supply Russia with new propaganda material.

The Russians suspect, of course, that the "educational fund" is just a blind for the Central Intelligence Agency and that the "tourist" involved actually was a rather obvious and bumbling CIA agent, his yarn about a book a rather transparent cover story.

A few more such incidents and the tourist-spy business could get rather sticky.